



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

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## HB 2249 RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Statement to  
House Committee on Ecology and Environmental Protection  
Public Hearing 13 February 1978

By  
Doak C. Cox, Environmental Center

HB 2249 proposes to amend HRS Chapter 341 so as to delete all provisions calling for the establishment and functions of the Environmental Council. Although HRS 341 does not prescribe any direct relationship between the Environmental Center and the Environmental Council, as Director of the Center, I have served informally as an ex officio member of the Council, without vote, since the Council was established. However, this statement does reflect the position of the Council, and it does not reflect an institutional position of the University.

The Council was established in order to provide liaison between the Director of the Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC) (and indirectly the Governor) and the public. In my opinion such liaison is of great importance because matters within the jurisdiction of the OEQC involve inherently a combination of objective aspects and subjective aspects. The former aspects are amenable to expert analysis, and it is part of the function of the Environmental Center to make the competence of the University Community available to the OEQC. The latter aspects are, however, not amenable to expert analysis, and the advice of a body such as the Environmental Council is much needed by the OEQC.

Although I might wish that the Environmental Council acted with greater independence and greater initiative, I believe that the Council has served very usefully. It has:

- 1) Recommended the establishment of the Temporary Commission for State-wide Environmental Planning whose report resulted in the proposal of both the Environmental Policy Act and the Environmental Impact Statement Act.

- 2) Made specific recommendations as to the undertakings or direction in planning of a number of important actions including for example:
  - a) The Malaekahana State Park development.
  - b) The planning for a Kaena Point State Park.
  - c) A study of resource recovery possibilities.
- 3) Overseen the preparation of annual reports on progress in achieving the State's environmental goals and policies.
- 4) Served usefully as a sounding board for the public in relation not only to matters strictly within OEQC's jurisdiction but to related matters as well.

Discontinuance of the Environmental Council would deprive the OEQC of its principal means for communication with the public and the principal source from which it should receive its guidance as to the subjective aspects of environmental problems.